

Broadband for Michigan Libraries

Support Resources

Broadband Support Resources

- Lots of existing support services
 - Library of Michigan
 - Library of Michigan Listserv
 - Other websites
 - Web Junction (www.webjunction.org)
 - Public Access Computing (www.pacomputing.org)
 - Tech Soup (www.techsoup.org)
 - Tech Atlas / Tech Surveyor (www.techatlas.org, techsurveyor.npower.org/techsurveyor)
 - Support helpline:
mibroadband@edtechstrategies.net

Broadband Support Resources (cont'd)

- Things to keep in mind
 - Existing resources vary widely in quality
 - User-contributed resources vary both in accuracy and quality of writing
 - Professional tech support generally accurate but quality of writing often leaves a lot to be desired
 - Different sites have different strengths

Technology Inventory: Understand What You Have

- Understanding what you have is critical to getting accurate and appropriate support
- Network diagramming a good way to envision what you have
 - Allows you to envision the actual interaction of hardware and software
- Hand-drawn network diagrams are fine
- Otherwise use tools like:
 - Visio (<http://www.microsoft.com/office/visio/>)
 - Dia (<http://www.lysator.liu.se/~alla/dia/>)

Technology Inventory: Tools

- Variety of Technology Inventory Tools
 - www.TechAtlas.org has a variety of online and offline tools
 - Worksheets for assessing technology inventory, training, databases, etc.
 - Tech Surveyor tool (from NPower) provides automated technology inventory
 - Machine by machine or network-wide tool
 - Helps you build good (but generic) technology plans based on the assessments
 - Provides recommendations for upgrades and a timeline for upgrades
 - Tool is free for now – but is an ASP solution where you don't have the data

Technology Inventory: Standardization

- Standardization important
 - Lowers the cost of support
 - Eases the cost of administration
 - Lower TCO
- Standardization also dangerous
 - Increased security vulnerability
 - "The 40% rule"
 - Diversity at different levels (and within levels) may be a good thing, esp. if you have confidential information

Technology Troubleshooting: Basic Resources

■ www.WebJunction.org

- Reasonably good docs on basic hardware, software, internet, networking, security
 - None of these sections are really strong technical support
 - They do, however, provide very good primers for non-technical staff (most are written by non-technical folks) – will help you ask the right questions
 - Fairly good documents for your own use (e.g. LAN needs worksheets)
 - In particular: very good overview of Internet and Networking, including the technologies, security, and simple how-to documents.

Technology Troubleshooting: Basic Resources (cont'd)

■ www.WebJunction.org

- Accessibility section
(<http://webjunction.org/do/Navigation?category=91>) very good. Good links to other libraries' information on accessibility
- Forums on WebJunction a reasonably good resource for finding the questions others are asking

Technology Troubleshooting: Basic Resources (cont'd)

■ www.WebJunction.org

- Concerns
 - Written by non-techies and community/users
 - Accuracy
 - Readability
 - Keeping content up to date
 - Very little specific, technical information available – WebJunction doesn't necessarily fill the niche that many have been seeking

Technology Troubleshooting: Basic Resources (cont'd)

- www.PAComputing.org
 - Designed to support the Gates Foundation donations
 - Has very specific information on the Gates hardware (computers, routers, etc.)
 - Generally linking into the manufacturers support and supplementing it with specific support information relevant to libraries
 - Has specifications for hardware and replacement information

Technology Troubleshooting: Basic Resources (cont'd)

- www.PAComputing.org
 - Some generic information on troubleshooting (some of which is very good!)
 - How-to's on various topics are well written and fairly accurate
 - Topics include printing, basic system administration, security, web serving, filtering, networking, maintenance, and adding and removing hardware and software.
 - Troubleshooting is organized by topic and fairly accessible
 - Topics include removable storage, multimedia, printing, Internet, local networking, crashes and error messages, logging into the network, and basic software issues.

Training

- Broadband shouldn't require significant retraining of patrons or most staff
 - Support staff need training
 - Procedures for contacting technical support will need to be modified
- When/if new services are made available, training will be needed for those new services

Training (cont'd)

■ www.webjunction.org Learning Center

- Provides online training
 - Internet user training
 - Basics of web browsing and content creation
 - System manager training
 - Basic system troubleshooting
 - Basic computer skills training
 - PCs, networking
 - Applications training
 - Microsoft Apps training

Training (cont'd)

■ www.webjunction.org Learning Center

- Training is free for now
- Appropriate for either staff training or user/patron training
- Course quality is fair

Policies and Best Practices

- Sample policies abound on the Internet
 - Libraries have put policies online for all kinds of purposes
 - Googling policies isn't necessarily a bad idea
- www.WebJunction.org has collected and links to many sample policies written specifically for libraries addressing a variety of issues

Policies and Best Practices (cont'd)

■ www.WebJunction.org

– Policies include:

- AUPs (staff and users)
- Staff and Volunteer management of technology
- "Difficult situations involving the Internet and Patrons"
- Technology planning policies (staffing, procedures, budgeting)
- CIPA Headquarters (lots of CIPA advice)
- General guidance for staff training
